

THE THEORY OF COLLECTIVE MEMORY
AND THE 1953 SHORT CREEK RAID

by

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ABSTRACT

A key question in collective memory research is how such memories are created and shared over time. This study consisted of a qualitative content analysis of documentary artifacts to determine whether there is a collective memory of the 1953 Short Creek Raid and, if so, how it developed and contributes to an ongoing sense of identity for some Fundamentalist Mormons. Documents were divided into three separate time periods. These documents included media interviews, personal essays, a commemorative calendar, speeches, religious sermons, a school curriculum and a best-selling book written by a former polygamous wife. Each document was analyzed using a protocol sheet with an initial set of categories, such as “divine intervention,” “heroes” and “us versus them.” The study found the 1953 Short Creek Raid is the basis for a collective memory. That memory was solidified during a “myth-making” period and is reinforced through family, community, school and church activities to perpetuate a common group identity among some present-day Fundamentalist Mormons still living in or with ties to the Short Creek area. This analysis has policy implications for public officials, social workers and others attempting to understand the present mindset, attitudes, actions and beliefs of many Fundamentalists Mormons, particularly those belonging to The Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. This analysis also provides a context for considering implications of internal and external threats to that collective memory.

In memory of my father, Thomas Ely McDonald,
who loved history and was a great storyteller.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I began my master's program in the fall of 2007. At the start of my second semester, I faced unexpected personal and professional demands. My father died suddenly in February 2008. Two months later, Texas authorities raided the Yearning for Zion Ranch in Eldorado, Texas, home to members of The Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. That event led me to spend nearly 5 months in Texas reporting on the aftermath for *The Salt Lake Tribune*. From then on, the end line for this project proved persistently elusive. I could not have finished without the encouragement of Cheryl Wright, my committee chair, who refused to let me quit. I am forever grateful to her. Professor Marissa Diener provided the same dedication and enthusiasm when Cheryl took a sabbatical, and inspired me to keep moving forward. Professor Sonia Salari impressed me in my first semester as a thoughtful, informed scholar, qualities that benefited me throughout this project as she challenged my thinking. Professor Scott Wright graciously shared his library with me and asked questions that shaped my explorations. I thank each of you for the generous amount of time and attention you gave me. I also thank members of the Fundamentalist Mormon community who shared their personal experiences of the Short Creek Raid. Also, I give special thanks to historians Ken Driggs and Marianne Watson for providing relevant documents. And finally, with love and appreciation to my husband Tom, who invested in my academic pursuits and gave up many nights of conversation and weekends of fun while I slogged away.

INTRODUCTION

In April 2008, Texas authorities took custody of 439 children who were living at the Yearning for Zion Ranch in Eldorado, Texas, after receiving a call for help now acknowledged to have been a hoax. The ranch is home to members of The Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, a polygamous sect whose primary headquarters is in Utah. The 2008 raid was the largest child welfare action in U.S. history. The children were returned to their parents after a ruling by the Texas 3rd Court of Appeals on May 22, 2008, which found removing all the children to be unwarranted. Until that moment, through two months of separation and legal proceedings, FLDS parents maintained a stoic, assured calm about the outcome: For them, the YFZ Raid and its aftermath was the past made present.

On July 26, 1953, Arizona authorities staged a similar raid on Short Creek, a polygamous community that straddled the Utah/Arizona state line (now known as Hildale, Utah, and Colorado City, Arizona). The raid was an attempt to eradicate what Arizona Governor Howard Pyle described at the time as a “fantastic insurrection” dedicated to “the production of white slaves” and forced marriages of all girls by age 15 (Pyle, 1953).

The 1953 Short Creek Raid was a seminal event in the history of the Fundamentalist Mormon movement, which formed after The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, beginning in 1890, abandoned the practice of plural marriage. Government authorities had staged previous raids in 1935 and 1944, each involving small

numbers of adults, but the broad action taken in Short Creek was unprecedented.

Authorities took custody of 153 children and their mothers living on the Arizona side (the community had approximately 450 to 500 residents at the time). Authorities transported the women and children to Phoenix by bus on August 1, 1953, and placed them in foster care. The national reaction was swift and harsh in condemning the action. Nevertheless, the women and children remained in state custody for 2 years (Bradley, 1993) before being allowed to return home. All did, although a few lived away from Short Creek for as long as 15 years before returning to the community. The 1953 Short Creek Raid is described as a traumatic event by those who experienced it and by their descendants, who are now spread throughout the Fundamentalist Mormon community but comprise a majority of the FLDS and a second group known as The Work of Jesus Christ, based in Centennial Park, Arizona.

The purpose of this study is to see whether the 1953 Short Creek Raid's effect on some Fundamentalist Mormons can be explained by the theory of collective memory. The theory, as proposed by French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs, suggests there are some memories that are "everybody's" and are "known from without" (Halbwachs, 1950/1980, p. 52). These "chains of memory" are forged through speeches, sermons, school curriculums, annual commemorations, and other means so that the experienced past is linked to the living present, where it continues to shape personal and group identities and perspectives (Misztal, 2003b).

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Examinations of the 1953 Short Creek Raid

Several researchers have described the 1953 Short Creek Raid as a traumatic, life-changing experience for residents of the polygamous community. However, none have looked at how the theory of collective memory might apply or help explain the current identity and worldview of some Fundamentalist Mormons. Driggs (1990; 1991; 1992; 2005) has written about the Fundamentalist Mormon movement, often addressing aspects of the 1953 Short Creek Raid. Driggs observes that various acts by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and government officials beginning in the early 1930s served to create a “core membership” around which the Short Creek community developed (Driggs, 1991). That need for unity was emphasized in speeches given by Leroy S. Johnson, who was a key figure during the raid and led the Short Creek Community from 1954 until his death in 1986 (Driggs, 1990). Johnson taught his followers that, as shown in 1953, the Lord would fight battles for them if their faith were strong enough (Driggs, 1990). Watson (2002) also found that the raids in 1935, 1944, and, especially, 1953 “strengthened individual and community resolve” to live by the tenets of the fundamentalist faith.

Bradley (1993) has written specifically about the 1953 Short Creek Raid. Bradley states that the raid led to “shared feelings of persecution” that caused Fundamentalist

Mormons to view themselves as “martyrs” for their faith. Negative opinions about the government action and recognition of the “powerful bond” it created among Fundamentalist Mormons led authorities to adopt a hands-off stance regarding polygamists and the Short Creek community in particular (Bradley, 1993). Bradley addresses the experiences of most women and children who were taken into custody in summary manner and does not provide detailed histories of her interviewees; there is no examination of how the event shaped their later lives or those of their descendants.

Other authors give brief historical accounts of the 1953 Short Creek Raid in books about polygamy or related topics, observing its function as a symbolic touchstone for Fundamentalist Mormons. According to *Mormon Polygamy: A History*, public opposition to the 1953 and earlier raids, as well as the expense incurred by taxpayers because of the actions, “altered the way many Americans, particularly mainstream Mormons, viewed prosecution of polygamy” (Van Wagoner, 1986, p. 207). Van Wagoner’s book does not include any personal accounts from raid participants or an examination of the event’s impact on participants’ lives, perceptions or government policy. The authors of *Polygamous Families in Contemporary Society* say the “modern era” of polygamy began with the “traumatic” raid at Short Creek and that the event is still “imprinted on the minds of fundamentalists” (Altman & Ginat, 1996, p. 48). The authors say the raid became a “rallying symbol” that solidified the identity of the fundamentalists and brought them attention and sympathy. They describe the growth of the community afterward, but provide no primary accounts of the experience. Hardy refers briefly to the 1953 Short Creek Raid, describing it in *Solemn Covenant: The Mormon Polygamous Passage* (1992) as the “most celebrated” of three antipolygamy raids and also as a “military assault” in

Doing the Works of Abraham: Mormon Polygamy, Its Origin, Practice and Demise (2007). Bistline (2004), a former member of the polygamous group that settled Short Creek, was in his early 20s and experienced the raid; he gives an overview of the event, with some explanation about how residents scurried to the Utah side to avoid arrest, in *The Polygamists: A History of Colorado City, Ariz.* But Bistline does not provide his own personal account of the event or that of other community residents. The 1953 raid as living history is apparent in the best-selling book *Escape*, written by Carolyn Jessop, a former member of the FLDS sect. The raid, Jessop writes, was the “most dramatic story told by her grandmother, who lived in Short Creek at the time and whose tales revolved around Johnson’s role in the event (Jessop, 2007). In writing about her life as a member of a different polygamous community, Spencer (2007) gives a brief account of the 1953 Short Creek Raid and states that it “bonded families even closer together” and filled them with “righteous pride.”

Between 2003 and 2010, I was assigned to cover polygamy at *The Salt Lake Tribune*, Utah’s largest newspaper. The 1953 Short Creek Raid surfaced repeatedly in conversations and interviews with current and former members of the two Short Creek-area polygamous communities. It seemed to cast a shadow over everyone and everything; it was usually discussed with great emotion and even religious reverence. Some of the people who experienced the raid and died shortly after were referred to as “martyrs,” their deaths directly attributed to stress caused by the event. Places where certain events took place were described as “holy ground.” Many people I met often connected the raid to current happenings, such as the state of Utah’s proposed sale of the hillock where lookouts watched law officers descend on Short Creek in 1953.

On collective memory and trauma dramas

Emile Durkheim first raised the notion of collective memory in association with commemorative rituals, but Maurice Halbwachs is credited with expanding that idea into a theory of collective memory (1950/1980). Halbwachs described collective memory as a “current of continuous thought whose continuity is not at all artificial, for it retains from the past only what still lives or is capable of living in the consciousness of the groups keeping the memory alive” (1950/1980, p. 80). According to Wertsch (2002), Halbwachs distinguished collective memory from history, which provides a “record of changes” that allow for critical reflection, ambiguity, and distinguishing between past and present. In contrast, a collective memory is characterized by a singular perspective, reflects a unique social framework, emphasizes an unchanging group essence, links the present to the past, and has “unquestionable heroic narratives” (Wertsch, 2002). Misztal provides similar criteria by saying a collective memory must have a narrative arc, with a “beginning and an end, an interesting storyline and impressive heroes” (Misztal, 2003b, p. 10). Thus a collective memory shapes identity and worldview and, echoing Durkheim, unites a society (Misztal, 2003a). Collective memory “enacts and gives substance to the group’s identity, its present conditions and its vision of the future” (Misztal, 2003b, p. 7). To be a collective memory, a past event must be “jointly remembered” and “commonly shared” (Misztal, 2003b, p. 13). Eyerman said a collective memory provides a “cognitive map” that explains to individuals and groups “who they are, why they are here and where they are going” (Eyerman, 2004, p. 161). Misztal (2003b) said a collective memory forms “symbolic frameworks that perform a sense-making function.

Wertsch (2002), in a study examining the Soviet era, uses a “triumph-over-alien-forces” narrative template to document the creation of a collective memory. That template includes an initial, peaceful setting that is disrupted; initiation of aggression by an “alien force;” a period of crisis and suffering; and triumph through heroic action (Wertsch, 2002, p. 93). He notes that in contrast to history, a collective memory has a “single, committed perspective” with “no patience for ambiguity” (Wertsch, 2002, p. 162).

Cappelletto (2003) said a “cultivated narrative memory of a profoundly frightening experience creates bonds of solidarity that unite—in a single verbalization—those who lived that experience and those who participate in the narrative events” (p. 257). Eyerman (2004) refers to “trauma drama” events that involve a “massive disruption and social crisis” that “become a crisis of meaning and identity” (p. 160). Citing Schuman and Scott, Wertsch (2002) said events that take place in early adulthood “seem to have a particularly powerful impact” on collective memory and political viewpoint. Rather than remembering, it is “re-experiencing” in such a way that the “individual or group merges with, or is part of the past event” (Wertsch, 2002, p. 46).

The theory of collective memory has been used to explore, by way of example, remembrance and identity of Holocaust survivors (Berger, 1995); Finnish families affected by Soviet occupation (Armstrong, 2000); the Soviet era (Wertsch, 2002); residents of two Italian towns attacked by Germany during World War II (Cappelletto, 2003); African Americans (Eyerman, 2004); Japanese Canadian women who spent time in internment camps (Sugiman, 2004); and Americans’ views of Abraham Lincoln (Schwartz & Schuman, 2005).

A key question in collective memory studies is how a collective memory is created and transmitted. According to Cappelletto (2003), a social group's memory is formed out of individual memories exchanged through social interaction. The seminal memory "can be recounted by those who were not witnesses as if its events had been experienced by them in person" (Cappelletto, 2003, p. 243). One means by which this identification occurs is through commemorative retellings that act as a "socializing process and a memory practice," usually incorporating "strongly ritualistic and even sacred overtones" (Cappelletto, 2003, p. 246). These public performances provide master narratives that connect and confirm membership in a group distinguished by a defined boundary (Eyerman, 2004; Neal, 2005). Schools and textbooks are also an important tool for transmitting an "idealized past" and social identity (Misztal, 2003b).

Misztal refers to "mnemonic communities" that indoctrinate "new arrivals" with the shared past so that they adopt the required social identity. These communities, unlike modern society, are "tradition-informed, past-oriented and memory-rich" (Misztal, 2003b, p. 46), which makes them ideal subjects for examining the working of collective memory.

Using theories of collective memory and cultural trauma, and a qualitative document analysis approach, I examined accounts of the 1953 Short Creek Raid presented in a radio address, published opinion articles, magazine and newspaper articles, speeches, sermons, a school history project, a community calendar, a school curriculum, and a best-selling, mass-market book. My research questions were: Did the 1953 Short Creek Raid result in a collective memory? If so, how was that memory created and shared over time?

METHODOLOGY

Qualitative document analysis

Much of the work on collective memory relies on analysis of documents, which Altheide (1996) defined as “any symbolic representation that can be recorded or retrieved for analysis.” In her analysis of collective memory of Finnish relocation after World War II, Armstrong (2000) conducted a content analysis of memoirs, diaries, personal correspondence, and interviews to show how personal experience merged into a collectively shared memory. Cappelletto (2003) also used content analysis, combined with historical research and field interviews, to show how storytelling linked participants and nonparticipants to a traumatic event. Sugiman (2004) used oral interviews of second-generation Japanese Canadian women to explore their memories of internment experiences and analyze traumatic events and memory formation.

Allen (1992) described the importance of storytelling in revealing a shared consciousness and perceptions of an historical experience. As Berg (2007) notes, using records and historical accounts to bridge past and present may increase understanding of contemporary issues. He also validates the use of “unobtrusive measures” to collect data for research, and content analysis to “identify patterns, themes, biases, and meanings” (2007).

Altheide defined qualitative document analysis as an integrated and conceptually informed method for finding and examining documents for relevance, significance, and

meaning. According to Strauss and Corbin (1990), qualitative research produces findings without reliance on statistical procedures and quantification; it is, therefore, interpretative, and includes such methodological approaches as content analysis, grounded theory, ethnography, phenomenology, and life history analysis.

Using Altheide's qualitative document analysis method, I focused on documents as a unit of analysis (Berg, 2007). This method allows a researcher to consider context (the social situation surrounding a document); process (how a document was put together and by whom); and emergence (gradual shaping of meaning as concepts, patterns, and themes emerge) (Altheide, 1996). This approach is reflexive, similar to grounded theory, in that it allows a researcher to circle back and refocus, depending on what emerges during the study.

Documents and categories used in analysis

My sample was, in the words of Altheide, "purposive and theoretical." That is, I selected documents purposely and with my research objectives in mind. Many of the documents I used fell into my hands, so to speak, during my work as a reporter and long before I undertook this study. Some are best described as an opportunistic sample: I found, for instance, the school curriculum in a garbage can in an abandoned schoolhouse in Colorado City, Ariz. Some documents, such as magazine articles, I collected over the years because of my interest in the Short Creek Raid. I selected over documents after I began to focus on the theory of collective memory, such as a transcript of a radio interview conducted shortly after the raid.

I placed these documents into three categories: contemporary accounts, which were given in 1953 by people or about people who experienced the Short Creek Raid;

myth-making accounts, which consist of retellings of the event in subsequent years; and past made present accounts, which are examples of how the raid experience is spoken of today by people who were not participants in the event. The following is a list of the documents examined in each category.

Contemporary accounts of the 1953 Short Creek Raid

1. Transcript of a KSUB Radio interview with Jonreed Lauritzen and Louis Barlow, August, 1953.
2. "An Open Letter to Governor J. Howard Pyle of Arizona," an address given by Jerold Williams and reprinted in *Truth* magazine in September, 1953.
3. "The Lonely Men of Short Creek," *Life* magazine article, Sept. 14, 1953.
4. "Why I Have Five Wives," *Collier's* magazine article by Edson Jessop and Maurine Whipple, Nov. 13, 1953.
5. "More than One Wife," *True Confessions* magazine article by "Lorraine Taylor" (pseudonym for Maurine Whipple) based on interviews with Verna Jessop and Elaine Jessop Bistline conducted July 31, 1953, and on an unspecified subsequent date, March 1954.

Myth-making accounts of the 1953 Short Creek Raid

1. Transcripts of three Sunday sermons given by Leroy S. Johnson, a raid participant and later community leader, in which the Short Creek Raid is referenced. The sermons were given on May 15, 1977; May 22, 1977; and Jan. 14, 1979, and are contained in a volume published in 1994 by Twin City Courier Press of Hildale, Utah.

2. “Raid of 1953 on Short Creek, Arizona,” a 627-page compilation of personal stories, photographs, magazine and newspaper articles, etc. assembled during the 1985-86 school year by students at Harker Academy, a private school operated by Fundamentalist Mormons at the Harker Farm in Beryl, Utah.

3. “Short Creek Historical Calendar: Memories of 1953,” a 24-page monthly calendar recounting daily events occurring in 1953 published in 1993 by Twin City Courier Press of Hildale, Utah, home to the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.

4. “The Story of the 1953 Raid,” lesson from the Reading Level 4 curriculum used in the private school system operated by the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (created approximately in 1994, found in 2006).

Past made present accounts of the 1953 Short Creek Raid

1. Transcript of a speech given by a woman identified at the time as “Linda” on Jan. 29, 2004, at the Utah Peace Officer’s Convention.

2. Transcript of a speech given by a woman identified at the time as “Leanne” on May 4, 2006, at a Utah Attorney General’s Office staff conference. Leanne was a member of the Centennial Park Action Committee, which represents the polygamous community of Centennial Park, Arizona. The speech was included in a booklet titled, *Polygamy: A Cultural Perspective*.

3. An opinion article written by Marlyne Hammon and published on April 29, 2004, in *The Spectrum*, a St. George, Utah, newspaper, and a transcript of a speech Hammon gave in July 2007 during a community commemoration of the 1953 Short

Creek Raid. Hammon is a member of the Centennial Park polygamous community and was 4 months old at the time of the raid.

4. Remarks by Winston Blackmore, a Fundamentalist Mormon and polygamist living in British Columbia, in a 2006 interview and newspaper story related to a raid commemoration event.

5. *Escape*, a 2007 memoir written by Carolyn Jessop, a former member of the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.

Coding of documents

I designed a protocol sheet with an initial set of questions, categories, and variables to use in studying this data-rich collection of documents. In analyzing each document, I looked for key themes, phrases, and words that fit within my initial categories: sacred/divine intervention; heroics; trauma; us versus them; identity; and, lessons. I allowed new categories to emerge during the process. For example, I found that comparisons were often made and added a category to accommodate such expressions. I also added a category to record use of sarcasm in describing the raid, a narrative style that was pronounced in documents from the myth-making period.

After completing a protocol sheet for each document, I analyzed my observations to determine the overall messages communicated. I used journaling to record my reaction to documents, noting points that resonated or surprised me as well as those that fit with or challenged my understanding of collective memory. Journaling also provided a self-check of bias and gave my study rigor. My professional experience as a reporter covering polygamy and interacting with current inhabitants of the Short Creek community provided me with theoretical sensitivity (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). That is, my

professional experience gave me added insight and the capacity to understand what was relevant and was not in the documents I analyzed. I also added rigor to my study by reviewing my conclusions with my thesis committee and with a member of the Short Creek memory community.

RESULTS

Contemporary accounts: A foundation is laid

The 1953 Short Creek Raid was hardly a secret. Residents knew weeks in advance that such an action was in the works and were tipped off about the exact timing days beforehand. That allowed the community to post lookouts along the only road leading to Short Creek on the night of July 26, 1953 (Bradley, 1993). As a long line of police cars approached around 4 a.m., the lookouts set off dynamite charges to alert residents the raid was underway. Louis J. Barlow, Jerold R. Williams, Edson Jessop, Verna Jessop, and Elaine Jessop Bistline were among those waiting at the community schoolhouse when the Arizona authorities arrived.

Each of these individuals made a public appeal in the aftermath of the 1953 Raid, authoring or agreeing to be interviewed and photographed in influential media of the day. All described the Short Creek community as idyllic and peaceful, populated by God-fearing people devoted to families they claimed were hardly different from those of their listeners or readers. The speakers described the raid as an “invasion” by government agents, who were compared to Adolph Hitler and Nero, the Roman emperor whose reign was marked by tyranny. No community, in their view, was safe from such “dastardly” encroachments, a theme used to build rapport with audiences. Each emphasized the traumatic impact of the raid, describing homes that were “like tombs,” “delicate women” forced into “unpleasant company,” and “scared and bewildered” children. Four of the five

documents make explicit reference to the raid as a test of faith for the Short Creek people and an action likely to incur God's wrath on those who instigated it. Two documents, the "Open Letter" written by Williams and the unsigned *Life* magazine article, show that the community immediately began to mythologize the raid by identifying 84-year-old Joseph S. Jessop, who died a month afterward, as a "martyr."

Barlow's radio address exemplified the patriotic appeal that was repeated to a lesser extent in the other contemporary documents. Barlow was a son of John Y. Barlow, one of the leading figures in the Fundamentalists Mormon movement and a founder of the Short Creek community. Barlow was born, raised, and educated in Salt Lake City before moving to Short Creek (FLDS 101). Shortly after his move, he joined the Navy and was discharged honorably in 1946 after 2 years of service. He received a teaching certificate in 1949 from Northern Arizona University in Flagstaff, Ariz., and was hired as teacher/principal at the public school in Short Creek. In 1948, Barlow secretly married a 15-year-old girl during her visit to Short Creek—much to the displeasure of her parents, who had not given consent and were subsequently able to have the marriage declared void without it being consummated (Watson, 2007).

At the time of the 1953 Raid, Barlow was 27 and had three wives, including one who was 15 (Bradley, 1993). He was among 36 men arrested and held in the Kingman, Arizona, jail for a week before being released on bond. Within days of his return to Short Creek, Barlow was interviewed on KSUB, an AM radio station based in Cedar City, Utah, located 64 miles north of the polygamous community. A majority of Cedar City residents then, as now, were members of the mainstream Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Jonreed Lauritzen accompanied Barlow to the radio interview. Lauritzen, an author of Western novels, was among the few non-Fundamentalist Mormon residents of Short Creek. His daughter Karen was 16 at the time and planned to marry one of the men from the polygamous community, which Lauritzen apparently opposed but left out of his narrative (Harker, 1986, p. 287). During the radio appearance, Lauritzen spoke first; his characterization of the raid and endorsement of Barlow provided an outsider's perspective and thus credibility. Lauritzen described the raid as "catastrophic" and "heart-breaking," setting a traumatic context for Barlow's remarks. He used inclusive language, calling the raid "an ordeal for us" and for "our neighborhood," an event so "tragic" he never hoped to see such an occurrence again. In expressing solidarity with the fundamentalists, Lauritzen made an unspoken appeal to listeners to join in his outrage. Speaking of Barlow, Lauritzen characterized him as modern, educated, and "progressive." He was "a friend" who had been "in our home," Lauritzen said, distinguishing Barlow as more than a mere acquaintance.

Barlow then spoke. He connected listeners to the Short Creek community by emphasizing the common Mormon heritage they shared. He spoke of unrestrained government intrusion and American patriotism, themes that no doubt resonated with his listeners. The armistice ending the 3-year Korean War had been signed the day after the Short Creek Raid and the atrocities that had led to World War II had not faded from the nation's conscience. His audience also would likely have called to mind how Mormon pioneers had been driven across the country by other state authorities just over 100 years earlier. Barlow's key message: the people in Short Creek were not the first to suffer for freedom and what had happened in that small hamlet was an affront to freedom for all

people. He used the word “peace” or variations of it 10 times to describe the community and its residents; in contrast, he used the word “invasion” five times in referencing the state’s action.

Only once did Barlow invoke the divine in his comments, referring to “our sacred homes” that had been desecrated by state authorities. Also of note, he referred only to “my wife” and, although he acknowledged the community’s belief in polygamy, said the governor’s accusations of forced, underage marriages and other misdeeds were false.

Edson Jessop, whose story appeared in *Collier’s* magazine, and Elaine Bistline, interviewed for the *True Confessions* magazine story, both described the raid as the Lord’s way of testing the people’s faith. “We know the Lord is sifting out the weak,” Bistline told Maurine Whipple, who wrote the unsigned article and also co-authored Jessop’s story. Bistline was 15 when she married her 19-year-old husband. Four years later, a second woman, age 17, asked to join the family, Bistline said. Jessop, who had five wives and 22 children at the time of the raid, said God was sure to intervene just as he had saved “the Hebrew children in the fiery furnace” and “Daniel in the lion’s den.” Williams took that theme even further in his “Open Letter,” published in *Truth* magazine. Addressing state authorities, Williams said a “just God will not permit you to succeed” and that no one offended God more than those who interfered in parent/child relationships. The people of Short Creek, he wrote, would “appeal to God and pray for deliverance.”

Myth-making accounts: A memory takes shape

In 1953, Leroy S. Johnson was a religious elder in the fundamentalist movement known as “The Work,” which include the Short Creek community. Although he was

among those arrested, “Uncle Roy,” as he was known, played a key role in directing the community’s response to the Short Creek Raid. In 1954, he ascended to the position of president/prophet of the group and held that post until his death, at age 98, in November, 1986. As leader, Johnson’s statements were thus not just authoritative; he spoke for God.

In numerous sermons given over three decades, Johnson drove home the message that the Lord had intervened on behalf of the people in 1953 because of their faithfulness. In the three Sunday sermons selected for this analysis, Johnson used the 1953 raid as a teaching tool, to demand obedience from sect members, and to further an “us versus them” mentality. For example, he described women of the community as heroes who “fought the battle” by refusing to testify in court hearings during the 1953 Short Creek Raid (Johnson, May 15, 1977)—which contributed to the event’s eventually triumphant outcome and provided an example worth emulating. He also identified the mainstream LDS Church as the people’s enemy, recounting how church leaders had endorsed the raid (Johnson, May 22, 1977).

One of Johnson’s key themes was that of the miraculous protection provided to the people by the Lord in 1953. As evidence of that divine intervention, Johnson’s sermon on May 22, 1977, referred to the discovery during the 1953 Raid of a law that prevented a child from being placed for adoption without a parent’s consent:

Soon after that they started their adoption of the children — or tried to, but the Lord told us where to find the necessary law to stop it. He spoke through my mouth. He said, ‘In your law book there is a clause that reads something like this, “No child can be adopted out without the consent of the parents”’. (Johnson, May 22, 1977)

A second miracle identified by Johnson was the inspired discovery of a uranium mine that allowed several community members to raise funds to pay legal bills:

Who paid the bill for the 1953 raid? The Lord paid the bill. He allowed the raid to come, to accomplish the work that he had in mind to do and then he opened the way to pay the bill. (Johnson, May 15, 1977)

In both speeches given in May, 1977, Johnson spoke about how ill health and death had struck those who opposed polygamists in earlier raids. In one example, Johnson said James E. Talmage, an LDS Church official, had taken ill and died several days after testifying against a polygamist in 1931 (Johnson, May 15, 1977). In fact, Talmage died more than 2 years later. But the point was made: those who opposed the fundamentalists or who failed to follow “this order of the Priesthood”—that is, the group led by Johnson—would be abandoned, even smitten, by the Lord.

But now, Johnson warned on Jan. 14, 1979, the “body of people here who are the children of the parents that were taken away in the 1953 raid” were in danger because of their lack of faith and recent failure to strictly follow their leaders:

This is what happened in 1953. The people of this little place got together and determined that they were going to serve God and keep His commandments under all circumstances; and they did a good job for two or three years. Then they began to drop away from their righteous living, and the Lord allowed the enemy to come in and take us out while there was a little faith left; and this brought us to our knees again. (Johnson, Jan. 14, 1979)

Johnson went on to say that currently, “the evil powers have crept in and eaten a great inroad among our people” and that it was up to his listeners to “straighten up their lives” (Johnson, Jan. 14, 1979).

Less than a decade later, as an enfeebled Johnson neared death, his role in the raid was increasingly being described as heroic. In the 1985-86 school year, students at Harker Academy, the community’s private school, embarked on an ambitious project to document memories of the Short Creek Raid. The project was similar to the catalog of recollections gathered by Tateishi (1999), who recorded oral histories of Japanese

Americans detained in internment camps during World War II to ensure their memory of the event was not lost. The result of Harker Academy's effort was a 627-page compilation titled "Raid of 1953 on Short Creek, Arizona." It included dozens of personal accounts of the raid, photographs, magazine and newspaper articles, letters, maps, speeches, etc.

The seven-section volume includes accounts from those who were "taken away" as well as those who were "affected but not actually involved" in the raid. Among the accounts of women "taken away" is that of Lucille Barlow, remarked that the "officers certainly found nothing in our community as it had been reported to be (Raid of 1953, 1986, p. 16). Barlow, 15 at the time of the raid, was the third wife of Dan Barlow, then 21. She was expecting her first child and described herself as the "youngest mother involved in the raid."

Barlow's account emphasized the trauma she felt as the "hideous, scary" raid began and expressed her belief at the time that the Lord would be "fighting our battles." She identified "Uncle Roy" as a "marvelous man and a seer," who went "anywhere his people were to bless and care for them and still does." She and her sister wife were among the women who stood up to authorities who "tried to get us to talk and incriminate our husbands and leaders, to no avail" (Raid of 1953, 1986, p. 16).

Because she was a minor, Barlow was sent to live with her parents in Salt Lake City, who were also fundamentalists but opposed the Short Creek group. As she described that return home, Barlow identified her family, other fundamentalists, and a state social worker as outsiders who attempted unsuccessfully to turn her against the group. Barlow listed her grandmother, who had a stroke on Dec. 25, 1953 and died a year

later, among the community's martyrs: "She was so lonely and depressed and hurt because they had taken all the lovely children and young mothers from their homes" (Raid of 1953, 1986, p. 19).

A child's perspective was provided in an account from Judy Barlow Darger. She was 8 years old when the raid occurred but lived on the Utah side of Short Creek and was thus not taken to Phoenix. Her account was offered as first-hand observation but included details that could only have been incorporated into her memory over time, displaying a morphing of personal and borrowed experiences. For example, she recounted how legal bills were paid when "the Lord opened up the way to pay it through a uranium mine." She also said "blessings and inspiration of the Lord to Uncle Roy" prevented a Utah mother from being separated from her children. She also described the heroic action of Joseph S. Jessop, her great-grandfather, in telling authorities on the night of the raid that, "If it is blood you want, take mine." Like other children, Darger would have been home in bed at the time the exchange occurred. Jessop's statement is the most quoted comment in accounts of the raid.

In Darger's account, there were many heroes. She described her mother, who was held briefly, crawling through fields in her Sunday clothes in order to not be seen as she sneaked back to her children. She also said her father's quick action kept some children "from the marauders." Three men who eluded authorities—Joe Barlow, Jack Cooke, and Dan Jessop—become almost mythical figures who stayed hidden throughout the first days of the ordeal but managed to offer "counsel and encouragement" the people, Darger said. "But I never saw them; I just heard they were near" (Raid of 1953, 1986, p. A19). At one point, those living on the Utah side of Short Creek staged a midnight trek through

the desert because they feared authorities planned to take the women and children into custody. Darger described the Utah mother, including her own, walking for hours with babies in their arms: “Mother’s arms were so taxed from carrying babies that she could not straighten them out for a long time” (Raid of 1953, 1986, p. A21). As in other accounts, Johnson received Darger’s highest praise because he “was able to gather up everyone and bring them home again” and because “he was an obedient faithful servant and an instrument in the hands of God” (Raid of 1953, 1986, p. A23).

Darger contrasted the “good environment” offered in Short Creek against the “worldly world” that existed outside the community. Spies were “ever lurking around” and when a box of food arrived one day, her family feared it might be poisoned “because everything else they did seemed to be bad” (Raid of 1953, 1986, p. A22).

Ronald Darger was 16 at the time of the raid but did not live in Short Creek, making him one of the individuals “affected but not actually involved” in the event. Nevertheless, Ronald Darger opened his account by stating that “subsequent experiences of my life were a direct result” of the raid. He acknowledged how “the dovetail of circumstances that shape our lives blends one experience with another” to shape identity and a sense of solidarity and then said, “We have been asked to keep alive the memory of the deliverance of our people so faith may be increased among us” (Raid of 1953, 1986, p. 359). In his brief account, he described hearing about the raid over the radio and feeling personally affected, which led him to declare “my indignation concerning the news.”

The compilation also included a presentation on the raid given on Nov. 11, 1986, at Harker Academy by Truman Barlow, Merrill Jessop, Dan Barlow and Arthur Blackmore. All but Blackmore lived in Short Creek at the time of the raid; only Dan

Barlow was arrested. Truman and Dan Barlow are brothers, sons of the previous prophet and community founder John Y. Barlow. Leroy Johnson raised them after the deaths of their parents. The Barlow brothers and Jessop emphasized the trauma they experienced as well as divine intervention in the way the “Lord has watched over us and Uncle Roy’s wonderful leadership,” as Dan Barlow put it. He reminded the young students that, “we cannot forget the raid. If we do we will displease the Lord. For it was a great deliverance to this people” (Raid of 1953, 1986, p. 464).

Their speeches were followed by a question and answer session that focused on how and why Johnson took charge during the raid, since he was not the community’s spiritual leader in 1953. The discussion, which occurred within 2 years of a leadership split in the Short Creek community, is notable for the way it resolved doubt about Johnson’s authority by emphasizing that he played an inspired role in the historic event.

Six years later, in 1993, the Short Creek community produced the “Short Creek Historical Calendar: Memories of 1953” to commemorate the event’s 40th anniversary. The introduction to the calendar described its purpose as presenting a “few reminders” so the youth “appreciate the great sacrifices that have been made to secure our religious freedoms” and “revive the bittersweet memories of those eventful days.” The calendar’s last line stated, in all capital letters: “DON’T FORGET, KEEP ON TELLING THE STORIES!”

The calendar listed daily events, month-by-month, for the year 1953. Events selected emphasized a peaceful community that was progressive, where culture flourished, people worked cooperatively, and patriotism was a deeply held value. The calendar noted the number of pianos in Short Creek in 1953 (27) and highlighted

songfests and plays produced in the months prior to the raid. That June, the community celebrated the opening of a sawmill. The entry for July 25, 1953, described how men and boys worked together to install a water tank on a windmill at the home of “Uncle Roy.”

The entries that chronicled the raid and its aftermath are thick with sarcasm. One entry noted women and children were served “a cookie and a drink of milk” after a 15-hour “tedious and unpleasant journey” by bus to Phoenix; another said the arrested men were locked in the kitchen of the community’s school, which was “hardly sufficient for retaining such *hardened criminals*.”

The calendar recounted numerous divinely inspired acts of Leroy Johnson. One referenced an earlier premonition he’d apparently had that the people were “on the verge of a time that has never been equaled before in the history of the world.” One entry described how Johnson had called on the jailed men to stay united and prayerful, which would result in their cell door being left open so they could get better air circulation [which then happened].

The calendar quoted from a 1953 essay written by Fred M. Jessop and reprinted in Vol. 19 of *Truth* magazine about the respect paid to an unnamed “superior patriot grandfather” (Joseph S. Jessop) at the July 24 celebration that took place two days before the raid: “Performing ex-soldiers who had seen foreign action for freedom’s cause, seeing him from the corner of their eyes, bowed their heads in reverence . . .” (*Truth*, 1953). The September 1 entry, the only calendar notation that referenced a specific day of the week (Tuesday), recorded Jessop’s death. He was hailed as a “PIONEER, PATRIOT, PATRIARCH, DEFENDER OF THE FAITH, MARTYR” who died as a result of “the

persecution of the Saints,” the calendar stated. The entry included a song composed in Jessop’s honor for his funeral.

But he was not the only martyr, according to those who created the calendar. One of Leroy Johnson’s wives gave premature birth on Oct. 12, 1953, “due to the stress and anxiety” of the raid. The infant died 8 days later and is “considered a martyr to the persecution of the Saints.”

Few residents of the community, regardless of whether they were arrested, taken to Phoenix, or left behind, were left out of the calendar’s account of events surrounding the raid. Dan Barlow’s role as the lookout at Berry Knoll was noted, as were the efforts of Lynn and Wayne Hunter, who had to snap 18 bushels of string bean for the deserted community. The name of every mother and every child transported or born in Phoenix was listed, as were names of the 31 men and nine women who were arrested and the 24 men/boys between the ages of 15 and 29 who were left behind. The calendar noted that Jerry Jessop’s 23-month marriage to one woman, then 15, was annulled and that he took the “disheartening news in a very calm and dignified manner.”

Youth in the Short Creek community also were educated about the raid in a reading curriculum developed about this time for the sect’s private school system. Among a 246-page portion of a Reading Level 4 program, I found six lessons that focused on the raid. The accounts drew on the first-hand experiences related by “Aunt Lydia,” who was one of patriarch Fred Jessop’s three wives at the time of the raid. Of note, none of the women had children; Jessop was sterile as a result of a bad case of the mumps during his youth.

The reading curriculum included vocabulary words, writing drills, analogy quizzes, and reading comprehension passages. There were also numerous photographs, including one of Fred Jessop's home in the 1950s and of Joseph S. Jessop waiting near the school with other residents as law officers arrived in the community. The vocabulary sections included approximately 30 words, with definitions for some. For example, in one lesson defined words included the following: raid; community; proceed; adopt; cautioned; escape; dedicate; signal; stationed; and eclipsed (there was a lunar eclipse the night of the raid, which Arizona law officers assumed would help conceal their movement). The definition given for the word "raid" is "A sudden, surprise attack made by police or soldiers; when law officers come in without warning and search through personal belongings and arrest people. (Webster's College Dictionary defines "raid" as "A sudden, hostile attack, esp. by troops, military aircraft, etc. or by armed, usually mounted, bandits intent on looting.") In select instances, a sentence was given that included a vocabulary word to illustrate its meaning. For example, this sentence was used to explain the word *bail*: "Bail had been paid for the fathers (sic) release."

Many of the vocabulary words and reading sections focused on trauma. Among vocabulary words were the following: deep grief; persecuted; raid; screaming; criminal; intimidate; kidnapped; imprisoned; and bail. One story passage recounted that the community knew a raid was coming and that the plan was "to put all the adults in prison and adopt out all the children. Then they would burn the town and destroy the records, so the children would not know who their parents were" (Story of the 1953 Raid, nd, p. 458).

Several reading passages emphasized the Lord's intervention on behalf of the people. In the Lesson 46 reading passage, titled "The Warning," Lydia Jessop stressed the

importance of keeping the memory of the raid alive and teaching children “what the Lord has done for us.” In the Lesson 51 passage, titled “Home Again,” Lydia Jessop said she hoped “we can all appreciate what has been done for us and help make this town a place the Lord can always bless for his people” (Story of the 1953 Raid, nd, p. 513).

After reading short passages, students were to choose the correct answer to multiple-choice questions. The questions often focused on trauma and the heroic acts that helped the community prevail in the end. Among the questions were the following: What did he [Governor Howard Pyle] plan to do with the children? Who ran from Berry Knoll to the schoolhouse to tell Uncle Roy that the officers were coming? Where did the officers stop Aunt Lydia? How did Aunt Isabell get back home without being noticed by the officers? How long did they tell the women they would be gone? (Possible answers to that question include the following: a few days; a few months; a few years; forever.)

Past made present accounts: An identity is shared

In 2004, nearly 51 years after the Short Creek Raid, a woman who introduced herself at the time only as “Linda” addressed an audience at the Utah Peace Officers Convention. At the time, some polygamists in Utah had begun to speak out in defense of their lifestyle and to work with the Utah Attorney General’s Office to broaden understanding of the culture. Linda’s comments revealed the shared sense of terror that rippled through circles of Fundamentalist Mormons during the Short Creek Raid and how it still reverberated, becoming incorporated in personal identities of those who did not actually experience it. In 1953, Linda was 4 years old and lived in Salt Lake City, far from Short Creek. She told the audience “My parents were terrified with the news and desperate to know what to do to hold our family together. They woke us in the middle of

the night and smuggled us into the car, to hide us somewhere in the canyons” (Kelsch, Jan. 29, 2004). Linda went on to describe having had childhood nightmares about being discovered hiding in a culvert to evade police. As an adult, she said she feared that her own children might be taken away in a Short Creek-style raid. The raid, she said on behalf of other polygamists, “is a very recent and real part of their history.”

Other fundamentalists have spoken publicly in ways that show the raid’s strong and lasting impact on personal and group identity. On April 29, 2004, *The Spectrum* newspaper in St. George, Utah, published an op-ed article written by Marlyne Hammon, a daughter of Edson Jessop. Hammon, who was 4 months old at the time of the raid, described the “loneliness and heartache” felt by her father and other men and the “anxiety suffered by those brave mothers.” “Life could have been nearly perfect for me as a child except for the dark cloud of persecution which hung over us,” Hammon wrote.

Hammon is a member of the Centennial Park community, which regularly commemorates the raid—a practice that extends memories of the event into the present and keeps people emotionally connected to it. During Centennial Park’s 2007 memorial program, Hammon observed that she had no immediate memory of the event but “to this day it has a profound effect upon me.” Hammon read from an account of the raid told by her grandmother that stressed how the people were assured “that God would fight our battles for us” (Hammon, 2007).

Another woman from the polygamous community of Centennial Park made similar points in a May 4, 2006, presentation to the Utah Attorney General’s Office. Identified at the time only as “Leanne,” she shared the story of her mother’s experience as a 7-year-old child during the raid. Leanne said that because of her mother’s

experiences, she and other polygamists who did not experience the raid have “an unconscious fear of you . . . This emotional history has had a significant impact upon the paradigms of modern-day polygamists.” Leanne told the audience “every family has a story of loss, sadness, or trauma that has become part of our mental schema and family culture.” She also said “every believing polygamist personally identifies with these raids. Our siblings, mothers, fathers, and grandparents were affected” and because of that, “we distrust government agencies” (Timpson, 2006).

The raid also served as an emotional touchstone in 2006 when Winston Blackmore, a Canadian polygamist, installed a marker memorializing the event in a park in the Short Creek community. (In 2003, Warren S. Jeffs, leader of the sect that dominates the Short Creek area, had ordered that a similar monument be destroyed.) Blackmore’s act had multiple purposes, including calling attention to Jeffs’ destruction of families in the FLDS community, but he also remarked that he hoped the monument would “get some people thinking about a miraculous event that happened in our lives” and how “the Lord did preserve us” (Adams, 2006). The inscription on the monument quotes Leroy Johnson: “July 26, 1953. We must never forget how the Lord blessed us in restoring our families taken in the ’53 raid. Uncle Roy.”

The raid is also recounted in a 2007 general interest book published by a former plural wife and member of the FLDS community. In her memoir *Escape*, Carolyn Jessop said, “the most dramatic story my grandmother ever told me was about the raid at Short Creek, Arizona, on July 26, 1953.”

My grandmother held me in her lap and lovingly told me these stories. It was as if she was handing me maps, charting out the future that she knew I was destined to live. (Jessop, 2007, p. 23)

And:

Grandma told us this story over and over, and it always began the same way—with her dream. (Jessop, 2007, p. 20)

In the dream, Jessop's grandmother is riding in a wagon driven by Leroy Johnson. They cross over an old bridge that spans a rushing river but arrive safely due to Johnson's skillful driving. The dream thus provided confirmation of Johnson's inspired leadership. Jessop said her grandmother's story of the raid also included "harrowing" scenes of wailing children and screaming mothers and a message about how "the women of the FLDS rallied to protect the work of God" (Jessop, 2007, p. 20). (Technically, the community did not become known as the FLDS until 1991.) The raid "sabotaged" the trust women had in outsiders and proved the importance of "obedience" to God and the prophet (Jessop, 2007). "Because it was believed that Uncle Roy had rescued them and saved them from losing their children, there was not a scintilla of doubt about his being a true prophet of God" (Jessop, 2007, p. 23).

DISCUSSION

To become a collective memory, an event must have mythical elements, arouse emotion, and result in increased group solidarity (Misztal, 2003a). It must also involve a traumatic disruption of life that is used to distinguish “those who are with us and those who are against us” and yield heroes who become models for future generations (Neal, 2005). According to Wertsch (2002), development of a collective memory requires an identifiable narrative template that ends with a “triumph-over-alien-forces.” That template is filled in and solidified as a group engages in reflection and discourse, commemoration, and a deliberate shaping of the past (Eyerman, 2004).

Judged by these criteria, the 1953 Short Creek Raid was the foundational event that allowed creation of a collective memory. The 1953 Short Creek Raid was a traumatic, life-altering experience for people living in the polygamous community at the time, including those families on the Utah side who were not taken into custody as well as polygamists living elsewhere. It created what Rubin and Rubin (2001) identify as a “solidarity community,” one connected by a shared, common, traumatic, and humiliating history that has been turned into a “source of pride” and identity. As a collective memory, the story of the 1953 Short Creek Raid includes mythical elements and heroic figures; retellings help increase group solidarity and follow a triumphant narrative template. The event is woven throughout the fabric of present-day life for some Fundamentalist

Mormons, retold and reinforced through various mediums: personal stories, sermons, speeches, school lessons, and commemorations.

I would not have been able to identify the 1953 Short Creek Raid as a collective memory if stories about it were merely recounted in a historical sense—that is, as something that happened in the past but an event from which individuals and the communities had moved beyond. I also would have had to disconfirm collective memory theory as explanatory if any of the following proved true: there were no identifiable heroes or mythical elements in documents I examined; there was no emphasis on an “us versus them” demarcation; there were no current, ongoing efforts to preserve the memory via active, commemorative presentations; raid stories were told in a distanced, rather than emotional, manner; the story ended in defeat rather than triumph; and, there was no evidence that the experience had been incorporated in personal identities of those who did not experience it. Figure 1 illustrates differences in narrative elements that lead to confirming or disconfirming existence of a collective memory of the 1953 Short Creek Raid.

In contemporary accounts of the 1953 Short Creek Raid, the “triumph-over-alien-forces” template was set up: there was a description of the peaceful Short Creek community, the invasion of Arizona authorities, and residents’ stories of personal crisis and great suffering. The contemporary accounts focused on the trauma experienced by Short Creek residents and articulated an expectation that God would fight battles for them.

A single hero was identified—Joseph S. Jessop, perhaps a result of the displacement of the community at the time. In the subsequent “myth-making” years, the final element of the template—the heroic triumph—was added as the Short Creek

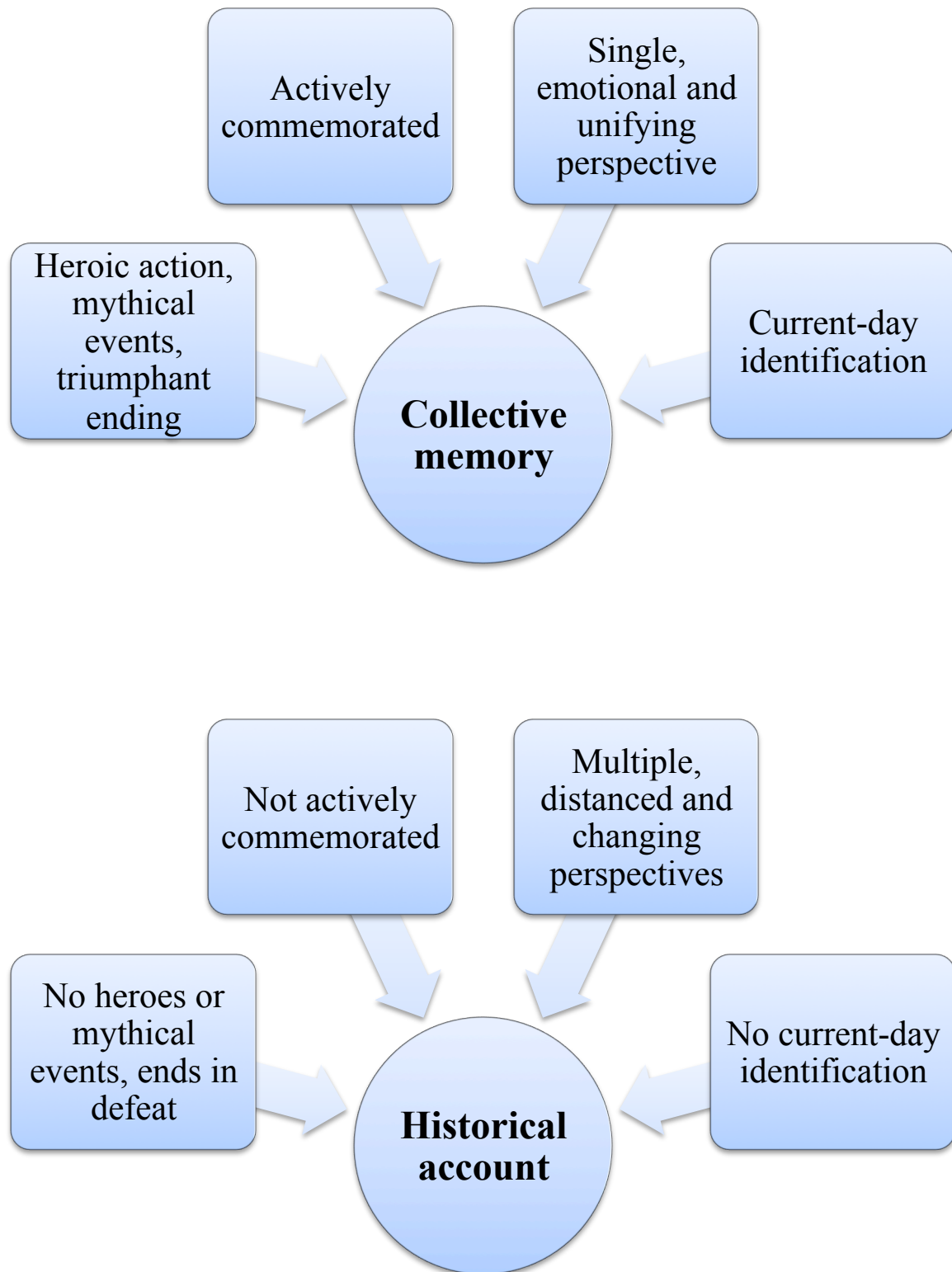


Figure 1: Observable differences in collective memory versus historical account.

community coalesced around the raid. Additional heroes were identified and specific individual acts held up as worthy of emulation (Leroy S. Johnson, the silent mothers, the men left to tend the community). Divine intervention was emphasized, as was the need for faithful adherence to directives of the Lord and his presumed prophets in order to guarantee continued heavenly protection. Individuals who spoke of Johnson's heroic, divinely inspired acts helped resolve any ambiguity about his authority at the time of the raid or his later succession as prophet, thus consolidating his power; these accounts also reinforced the notion of a prophet's infallibility. The Harker Academy project, in particular, helped strengthen Johnson's authority and thus reinforced the need to follow a single leader, a departure from the group's past reliance on a leadership council. Work on the compilation, produced in the last year of Johnson's life, closely followed a fracture between the aged prophet and two members of his governing council. Johnson had removed them from leadership positions and the two men left the community and, in 1986, founded the separate polygamous enclave of Centennial Park, Arizona.

By identifying Johnson as a heroic, divinely inspired figure, his followers made sure he was the man to follow at a critical juncture in the community's history, setting a pattern for the future. In addition, expansion of the "alien" enemy to include nearly all those who were outside the fundamentalist community solidified the group's identity and allegiance to a presumably anointed leader, a perspective particularly shared by the FLDS.

In the present day, many Fundamentalist Mormons with ties to the Short Creek community are able to speak of the raid with the same intensity of emotion and as central to personal identity as those who actually experienced the raid directly. This is particularly true of members of the FLDS and Centennial Park communities. For those

who now share the memory, the raid continues to influence current views of and interactions with people who do not belong to the solidarity community. The story of the 1953 Short Creek Raid strengthened these Fundamentalist Mormons' sense of being a chosen people, created a deep distrust of government and increased a desire to remain separate from the outside world. At the time of the raid, the trauma felt extended to Fundamentalist Mormons throughout Utah, who feared they might be next. Through repetitive telling of the story, those who did not experience the event have been able to adopt it as an "imaginary memory" (Cappelletto, 2003). Wertsch (2002) uses the Russian word "prisvoenie," which means "the process of making something one's own," to explain how a text is incorporated into one's identity. That phenomenon is seen in the accounts from Linda, Leanne, and Marlyne Hammon. By reframing their past, these descendants have turned a "prior humiliation into a source of pride" (Rubin & Rubin, 2001).

The 1953 Short Creek Raid provides a unique opportunity to examine the development of a collective memory since all of those who experienced it—and many of their descendants—remain in contained communities. A variety of narrative tools were used to shape a collective memory of the raid: family stories, school curriculums, sermons and speeches, and production of commemorative items and events. For example, Carolyn Jessop's story of learning about the raid at her grandmother's knee shows the process at work in the most intimate of settings. The school curriculum made the historical event a matter of rote learning. By fourth grade, the community's children had likely heard stories about the raid on numerous occasions and in many different forums. Still, one can imagine the secondary trauma the children might have felt working through

this section of the reading program. Sermons that mentioned the raid stressed its importance as a defining and divine moment for the community. The lessons of the raid were, and continue to be, ever present.

In the years that followed the 1953 Short Creek Raid, cultivation of a collective memory of the event defined, delineated and, for the FLDS, emboldened the community, which thrived over the next five decades as chastened government officials kept their distance. For some within the FLDS sect, this intertwining of history and identity had disastrous consequences when Warren S. Jeffs seized power over the group in 2002. It allowed Jeffs to use his position to manipulate and abuse followers. When government officials raided the sect's Texas ranch in 2008, reactions of men and women alike during the ensuing investigation and legal proceedings were conditioned by a collective memory of the 1953 raid. Perhaps most telling, the FLDS described the children's return to their parents with the same language used in 1953. One member wrote on an FLDS-sponsored blog that sect members "gratefully acknowledge the hand of our Father in Heaven in delivering practically all of the mothers and children . . . The memories remain, and many women and children have been scarred for life by the abuses they endured at the hands of their so-called 'deliverers'" (Richter, 2009).

Government authorities in two states, separated by the passage of 55 years, have now engaged in broad-scale actions aimed at disrupting controversial polygamous practices associated initially with the Short Creek community and subsequently with the FLDS sect. In 1953, writer Maurine Whipple wrote in *True Confessions* magazine that authorities wondered whether the Short Creek Raid would destroy or strengthen the polygamous community. An understanding of collective memory might have predicted

the answer. There is no question the raid caused community members to become more insular and united around peculiar religious practices; the outcome of the 2008 Texas raid remains to be seen, since it appears to lack critical elements of a collective memory. For example, 10 men, including Jeffs, have been convicted and sent to prison based on evidence uncovered during that investigation—seemingly eliminating any sort of triumphant conclusion to the story. But an understanding of how traumatic events can be used to create a collective memory and to rally group allegiance may be helpful in the future to authorities who interact with and attempt to interpret responses of such closed groups. It also may be helpful for understanding implications of two current threats to the collective memory of the 1953 Short Creek Raid, one internal and the other external.

Internal and external threats

According to Halbwachs (1950/1980), location is key in preservation of a collective memory. He said: “Every collective memory unfolds within a spatial framework . . . we recapture the past only by understanding how it is, in effect, preserved by our physical surroundings” (Halbwachs, 1950/1980, p. 140). The Short Creek environs, then, are deeply related to the spiritual and psychological identities of those who hold the 1953 raid as a collective memory. Given that, Jeffs, either wittingly or by accident, has threatened his followers’ psychological equilibrium in three ways. In 2003, he prohibited the community from commemorating the raid, going so far as to expel Dan Barlow and others from the sect after they established an official museum and monument dedicated to the event. Second, Jeffs moved the sect’s geographical center to Texas in 2004. And third, following the 2008 investigation in Texas, Jeffs’ personal journal (released in court proceedings) showed he had declared that God had abandoned Short

Creek, though it is unclear to what extent followers are aware of this pronouncement. The ultimate result of Jeffs' acts may be to sever the Short Creek spiritual community from the place that helps keep its collective memory intact, thus fracturing group and personal identity in the process. One possible outcome of such a fractured identity could be an unraveling of the religious sect itself.

The second threat is an external one, posed by government authorities in Utah and Arizona who, since 2005, have worked to dismantle the communal property that makes up the Short Creek community—including selling the knoll where Dan Barlow and other lookouts were staged during the 1953 Short Creek Raid. The apparent buyer is a member of the Centennial Park community, which has thus pitted the two groups—both of whom hold collective memories of the raid—against one another. The FLDS have staunchly resisted government efforts to remake the community. It is unclear whether the government action is deliberately designed to disrupt residents' psychological ties to the land or whether that will be an accidental side effect, but in either event, understanding the way collective memory, identity, and place are interwoven would seem important. As Myszal said, forgetting can be imposed by “rewriting and censoring” history as well as by “destruction of places of memory” (Myszal, 2003b, p. 18).

Strengths and limitations

This study of the 1953 Short Creek Raid and collective memory has several strengths. It focused on an understudied, largely self-contained group comprised of individuals who experienced a traumatic event and their descendants, which aided my ability to document the creation of a collective memory and trace its transmission and expression. The study used a wide variety of documents referencing the raid, which

allowed me to explore how the memory evolved and was interwoven in numerous facets of the community's life. The study also benefited from my personal observations of individuals who experienced the 1953 Short Creek Raid and their descendants, ongoing events involving the community, and the 2008 investigation in Texas.

My personal experiences in reporting on the polygamous community may be a limitation of the study, particularly in selection of document and interpretations of them. I purposefully limited use of my own work to reduce bias. I also kept a journal of my reactions to the documents as a check on the rigor of my analysis. The analysis may, nevertheless, have been limited by the fact that I worked alone in coding and interpreting documents. Another limitation may have been the purposeful selection of documents used in this study; it is possible that other documents or a wider selection of documents might not support my conclusions. The analysis also did not account for other factors that instill fear among current-day Fundamentalist Mormons, such as ongoing threats of government prosecution.

Future research

Based on this study, future research might look at how internal and external changes to the polygamous community living in the Short Creek area affect its collective memory of the 1953 raid; whether the FLDS supplant a collective memory based on the 1953 Short Creek Raid with one based on the 2008 YFZ Ranch investigation in Texas; a comparative analysis of the 1953 and 2008 raids related to collective memory theory, particularly given the significant prison sentences nearly a dozen men received in 2008; the role of a collective memory of the 1953 Short Creek Raid in shaping expected behaviors of Fundamentalist Mormon women and, as Misztal (2003b) notes, as a

“justification for power;” and, given the large number of FLDS members who have left the sect and no longer live in the Short Creek area, the role of place in sustaining a collective memory.

APPENDIX

SAMPLE OF 1953 RAID READING LEVEL 4 CURRICULUM

Lesson 46

The Story of the 1953 Raid

Experienced by Aunt Lydia Jessop

Part A — Vocabulary Preview

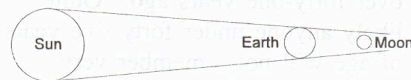
1	2	3	4	5
electricity	raid	Arizona	destroy	Colorado City
important	signal	adults	records	hand crank
officers	system	prison	cautioned	Berry Knoll
Hurricane	private	deciding	escape	community
Hildale	proceed	protection	lying	dynamite
Fredonia	adopt	eclipsed	stationed	dedicate

- raid:** a sudden, surprise attack made by police or soldiers; when law officers come in without warning and search through personal belongings and arrest people
- community:** town; city; a place where many families live (*Our community is a pleasant place to live.*)
- proceed:** begin; start (*The policemen were told to proceed into town.*)
- adopt:** to take children from their mothers and fathers and place them into another family
- cautioned:** warned; advised (*We were cautioned to not cross the bridge.*)
- escape:** to get away; to leave without permission; flee (*They were told to not try to escape.*)
- dedicate:** to set apart for a special purpose; to be placed in the Lord's care for his will to be done

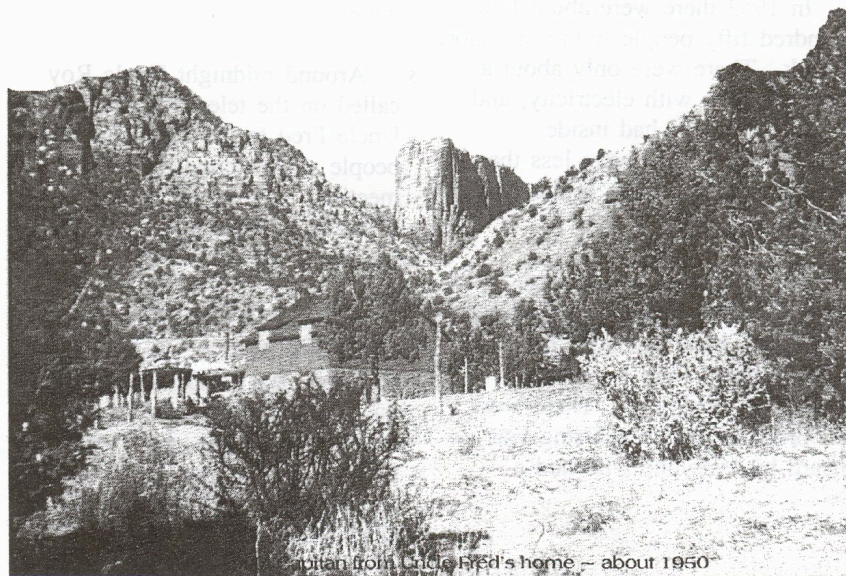
8. **signal:** give a warning (*They gave the signal to warn the people.*)

9. **stationed:** placed; to go to a certain place and stay there (*Several young men were stationed at the state line.*)

10. **eclipsed:** the past tense of eclipse; an eclipse is when the moon cannot be seen because the shadow of the earth covers it



When the moon moves into the earth's shadow, it becomes eclipsed. This is called a lunar eclipse.



Part B — Story

The Warning

1 The raid happened just a little over forty-one years ago. Quite likely anyone under forty-five years of age will not remember very much about it.^(A) Uncle Roy often told us it was very important to teach the children about the raid and what the Lord has done for us.^(B) So I will tell a few things that I remember about it.

■ 2 Errors

2 In 1953 there were about four hundred fifty people living in Short Creek. There were only about a dozen homes with electricity, and very few homes had inside bathrooms. There were less than two dozen telephones in the whole community.^(C)

3 The telephone was a square wooden box. It hung on the wall and had a hand crank on the side. The numbers were a system of short and long rings. There were no private lines. Each ring was heard by everyone who had a

phone.^(D) Both towns were called Short Creek. Hildale was not named until a few months after the raid.^(E)

4 On the afternoon of July 25, 1953, we were told that the state of Arizona was planning to raid our little community. They were going to put all the adults in prison and adopt out all the children. Then they would burn the town and destroy the records, so the children would not know who their parents were.^(F)

5 Around midnight Uncle Roy called on the telephone and told Uncle Fred to gather all the adult people at the school house for a meeting. The school house was where the Colorado City Public Library is now.

6 When we were all together, Uncle Roy told us what the State was planning to do. He cautioned the people to not run or try to escape, but to stay and trust in the Lord for protection.^(G) Uncle Rich and Uncle Carl Holm were there. Uncle Roy said: "Fred sing Zion."

So we sang "Oh Ye Mountains High." He then asked Grandpa Jessop to dedicate the people to the Lord.^(H)

watch the road from Fredonia. In the moonlight they could see a long line of cars coming slowly (toward town) with their lights off.

7 On the west side of town at the state line, Orval Johnson and some others were watching the road from Hurricane. They set off a dynamite blast to signal to us that the officers were coming.^(I)

9 The moon eclipsed so when they got to Berry Knoll they stopped. Our men lying near could hear them talking on their radios, deciding how to proceed. Dan Barlow ran all the way from Berry Knoll to the school house to report to Uncle Roy.^(J)

8 Dan Barlow and some others were stationed at Berry Knoll to

□ 12 Errors



The Story of the 1953 Raid
The Warning

Part C — Independent Work**Comprehension**

A Write the letter of the best answer for each question.

1. According to the story how old would you have to be to remember very much about the raid?
(a) under 45 years
(b) over 45 years
(c) at least 41 years
(d) 20 years or older
2. How many people were living in Short Creek in 1953?
(a) about 400 people
(b) about 450 people
(c) about 500 people
(d) about 1000 people
3. How many homes had electricity at the time of the '53 raid?
(a) about 6
(b) about 12
(c) about 20
(d) more than 24
4. How many telephones were in the community?
(a) about 6
(b) about 12
(c) about 18
(d) about 24
5. The two towns of Colorado City and Hildale were known as:
(a) Short Creek
(b) Colorado City
(c) Hildale
(d) None of the above

B *Answer the questions.*

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>6. What day did the State of Arizona make a raid on Short Creek?</p> <p>7. What did Governor Pyle want to do with the adults in Short Creek?</p> <p>8. What did he plan to do with the children?</p> <p>9. Why did he want to burn the town and destroy the records?</p> <p>10. Uncle Roy called a meeting at midnight and told the people of Short Creek that the state of</p> | <p>Arizona was planning a raid on them. What did he tell the people to do?</p> <p>11. What did Uncle Roy ask Grandpa Jessop to do?</p> <p>12. The officers had been traveling toward Short Creek with their lights off. Why did they stop at Berry Knoll?</p> <p>13. Who ran from Berry Knoll to the school house to tell Uncle Roy that the officers were coming?</p> |
|--|--|

Vocabulary

A *You can often tell the meaning of a word by reading the words around it. Look at each number in parentheses. Find the paragraph in the story with the same number. Then find the word that fits the given meaning. Write the word.*

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>1. a building criminals are kept in (4)</p> <p>2. grown ups; men, women (4)</p> <p>3. twelve (2)</p> | <p>4. pattern; way of doing something (3)</p> <p>5. making plans (9)</p> |
|---|--|

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